

# Arts Council of Northern **GUIDE TO OBTAINING INFORMATION FROM F.O.I. PUBLICATION SCHEME**

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## BACKGROUND

The Freedom of Information Act came into force at the beginning of 2005. It deals with access to official information, while parallel regulations deal with environmental information.

The Act provides individuals or organisations with the right to request information held by a public authority. They can do this by letter or email.

The public authority must tell the applicant whether it holds the information, and must normally supply it within 20 working days, in the format requested.

As part of our normal practice the Arts Council of Northern Ireland consults with third parties before disclosing third party information but the decision of whether to disclose the information remains with the Arts Council.

However, the public authority does not have to confirm or deny the existence of the information or provide it if an exemption applies, the request is vexatious or similar to a previous request, or if the cost of compliance exceeds an appropriate limit.

If exemption applies, but is qualified, this means that the public authority must decide whether the public interest in using the exemption outweighs the public interest in releasing the information.

If an applicant is unhappy with a refusal to disclose information, they can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (I.C.O.), after first exhausting any internal review procedure. The I.C.O. will investigate the case and either uphold the authority's use of an exemption or decide that the information must be disclosed.

Information must also be published through the public authority's publication scheme. This is a commitment by a public authority to make certain information available, and a guide on how to get it.

Section 19 of the Act obliges every public authority to adopt an approved Publication Scheme. The intention of a Publication Scheme is to require authorities to make certain kinds of information routinely available to the public.

The approval of all current schemes expired on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2008. The I.C.O. approved (under section 20 of the Act) a new model scheme which is suitable for every public authority to adopt with effect from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2009. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland commenced following the new model publication scheme from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2009. This scheme is available on the I.C.O. and Arts Council websites.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHEME

This guidance explains how information listed in the publication scheme may be obtained from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

The publication scheme commits the Arts Council of Northern Ireland to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority.

The scheme commits the Arts Council of Northern Ireland:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make the publication scheme available to the public.

## CLASSES OF INFORMATION

### Who we are and what we do

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) was established in 1962 as a successor to the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) which had operated since 1942. 'The Arts Council of Northern Ireland (1994)', a company limited by guarantee, ceased activity in August 1995. The Arts Council became a statutory body on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1995. Its core business is providing grants to professional artists and arts organizations throughout the region in a wide variety of artistic disciplines and to act as the principal development agency for the contemporary arts. The Arts Council is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), with the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) as its sponsoring Department. It receives its principal core funding through public expenditure lines. It has its own accountability arrangements regulated by a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) drawn up by DCAL in consultation with the Council.

The Arts Council is also a National Lottery Distributor. Lottery funding is administered through the parent department of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The Council is separately accountable to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for its lottery functions.

A Council, appointed by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) manages policy and funding decisions at ACNI.

The Council is made up of the Chairman plus 11 members, providing a broad cross-section of expertise and including representatives from the arts and culture sector. The current members were appointed in December 2011 for a term of four years. All appointments are made in accordance with the guidance of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.

The Chairman and Council members have individual and collective responsibility to the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (or, in the absence of a locally devolved administration, a Minister from the NIO) for the governance of the Arts Council.

The members of the Council are:

Bob Collins – Chairman  
Damien Coyle – Vice-Chairperson

David Alderdice  
Anna Carragher  
Noelle McAlinden  
Katherine McCloskey  
Professor Ian Montgomery  
Paul Mullan  
Professor Paul Seawright,  
Brian Sore  
Janine Walker  
Conor Shields  
Nisha Tandon  
Eibhlínn Ní Dhochartaigh

### **Organisational Structure**

The Chief Executive, Roisín McDonough, has overall responsibility and accountability for the efficient running, overall performance and future management of the organisation and reports directly to Council. An Executive Team supports the Chief Executive in her role and each member has day-to-day responsibility for a distinct area of operation. The Directors of each area of operation are:

Geoffrey Troughton – Director of Corporate Services  
Nick Livingston – Director of Strategic Development  
Lorraine McDowell – Director of Operations  
Noirín McKinney – Director of Arts Development

### **Legislative Basis**

A description of the full functions of the Council is set out in Article 4(1) of the Arts Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1995:

- to develop and improve the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts;
- to increase public access to, and participation in, the arts;
- to encourage and assist: the provision of arts facilities and events; and co-ordination and efficient use of resources for the arts;
- to assist the provision of administrative services and training for or by any body providing facilities for, or in connection with, the arts;
- to advise the Department and other government departments, district councils and other bodies on matters relating to the arts and such other functions as are conferred on the Council by any other statutory provision;
- to allocate funds made available by central government and the National Lottery for the arts;
- to advocate the causes of the arts to central and local government and the public generally;
- to advise the public and private sectors on artistic matters;
- to assist artists and arts-activists.

In addition, the Arts Council has statutory functions under the National Lottery Act 1993 as amended by the National Lottery Act 1998. Funding through the National Lottery is administered through the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

The Council delivers its functions and pursues its objectives by:

- Providing funding and developing contemporary arts in Northern Ireland
- Providing information services to the arts community and encouraging support for the arts from others, including: Northern Ireland's 26 district councils; the education sector and development agencies.
- Supporting arts and arts activities wherever they occur including galleries, theatres, community venues, youth clubs, schools, hospitals and workplaces.
- Providing awards and bursaries, travel and research grants to artists and the arts community
- Promoting the work of artists internationally by working with partners
- Supporting the arts and providing opportunities for every citizen to develop their own creative talents and to benefit from those of others.

## **Management Statement & Financial Memorandum (MSFM)**

A management statement and financial memorandum have been drawn up by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in consultation with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

The Management Statement sets out the broad framework within which the Council will operate, in particular:

- the Council's overall aims, objectives and targets in support of the Department's wider strategic aims and current Public Service Agreement (PSA);
- the rules and guidelines relevant to the exercise of the Council's functions, duties and powers;
- the conditions under which public funds are paid to the Council;
- how the Council is to be held to account for its performance.

The associated financial memorandum sets out in greater detail certain aspects of the financial provisions that the Council shall observe.

The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum do not convey any legal powers or responsibilities.

## Contact Details

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the operation of the Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If you wish to contact us about the Scheme, the Arts Council would be pleased to hear from you. Requests for information under the Freedom of Information can be made to:

Operations Officer  
Arts Council of Northern Ireland  
Mac Neice House  
77 Malone Road  
Belfast  
BT9 6AQ

E-mail        [foi@artscouncil-ni.org](mailto:foi@artscouncil-ni.org)

Telephone    028 9038 5200

Fax        028 9066 1715

TypeTalk    0800 515 152

## **Publications**

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/customer-service/freedom-of-information>**

5 Year Arts Plan (2007-2012)

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/strategy>**

Council Members

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/the-board>**

Register of Interests

**[http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/board\\_doi.pdf](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/board_doi.pdf)**

Hospitality

**[http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/gifts\\_hosp.pdf](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/gifts_hosp.pdf)**

Council Agenda and Minutes

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/board-meetings>**

Management Statement

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/the-board>**

The Executive

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/the-executive/>**

Staff List and Organisational Structure

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/staff-list>**

## What we spend and how we spend it

### **Financial Statements, Budgets and Variance Reports**

Under Section 8 of The Arts Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 the Arts Council of Northern Ireland is required to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year in the form and on the basis determined by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure with the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must show a true and fair view of the Council's state of affairs at the year end and of its income and expenditure, total recognised gains and losses and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing accounts the Arts Council of Northern Ireland is required to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (for the Lottery Distribution Account this is on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport), including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- observe the current version of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRM);
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the body will continue in operation.

The Accounting Officer for the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) has designated the Chief Executive of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland as the Accounting Officer for the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Her relevant responsibilities as Accounting Officer, including her responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which she is answerable and for the keeping of proper records, are set out in the Non-Departmental Public Bodies' Accounting Officer Memorandum, which is issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel, and in Financial Directions issued by DCAL on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under s26(3) of the National Lottery etc Act 1993.

The Arts Council Exchequer and National Lottery Annual Reports and Accounts are published on a regular basis and are available through the Arts Council website.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland annual budget is set by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. The Council also distributes National Lottery funding received through the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The executive of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland supports the Council and its committees in setting the annual budget across its activities.

The budget for each year is set by the Council and published alongside the annual reports and accounts on the Arts Council website.

The Arts Council is the lead development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland. It provides the main financial support for artists and arts organisations, offering a broad range of funding opportunities through its Exchequer and National Lottery funds. Individual artists and organisations are eligible to apply for funding and the details of how to apply are available from the Arts Council website. The details of successful applications are also available on the website, and also on the Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) Funding website and Northern Ireland Civil Service Funding website.

### **Capital Programme**

The Arts Council funds the building of new arts centres and the refurbishment of existing provision. This has included substantial capital cost grants to several significant architectural projects in Northern Ireland.

Information about capital projects funded by the Arts Council is available on the Arts Council website.

## **Financial Audit Reports**

The accounts of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland Exchequer Account are prepared in a form directed by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure with the consent of the Department of Finance and Personnel in accordance with Section 8 of the Arts Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

The accounts of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland Lottery Account are prepared in accordance with the direction given by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, with the approval of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport, in accordance with s35(3) of the National Lottery etc Act 1993.

Both sets of financial statements are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG). He is Head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and he and his staff are wholly independent of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. He reports his findings to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Arts Council audited accounts are available on its website.

## **Staff and Board Members' Allowances and Expenses**

Staff are reimbursed for certain expenses incurred during the course of Council business in accordance with current rates and conditions which are determined by the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Staff are expected at all times to exercise economy and adhere to the highest principles of integrity in claiming for expenses.

Members of staff may claim reimbursement for one ticket at any arts event in which they have direct artform assessment responsibility. The Chief Executive may claim reimbursement for one ticket at any arts event.

Details of the rules covering staff expenses are detailed in the Arts Council Staff Handbook.

Separate guidelines exist covering expenses for Board members in line with the 'Code of Best Practice for Board Members' in the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM).

Annual figures for staff and board members allowances and expenses are published on the Arts Council website.

### **Pay and Grading Structures**

The Arts Council follows the Northern Ireland Civil Service pay and grading structure. These are published by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and the public sector union NIPSA.

The Arts Council publishes an organisational structure chart and staff list on its website.

### **Procurement Procedures**

In accordance with the MSFM, the Arts Council follows standard Northern Ireland Civil Service rules for the procurement of goods and services. These are detailed on the Central Procurement Directorate of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (a link to which is provided at the end of this section).

### **Lists of Contracts Awarded and Their Value**

Contracts currently available for public tender are advertised on the Arts Council website.

Existing contracts and their renewal dates, where applicable, are also provided on the Arts Council website.

### **Financial Statements for Projects and Events**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland funds organisations and individuals to undertake, attend and organise arts based projects and events. Details of funding awards are provided on the Arts Council website.

Details of projects organised / instigated by the Arts Council are also provided on the Arts Council website.

## Internal Financial Regulations

The internal financial procedures of the Arts Council are available on the Arts Council website.

## Publications

Annual Reports and Audited Accounts

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/news/publications-archive/g/annual-reports>**

Funding Programmes and Guidelines

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/funding>**

DCMS Awards Database

**<http://www.lottery.culture.gov.uk/Search.aspx>**

Northern Ireland Government Funding Database

**<http://govfundingpublic.nics.gov.uk/Home.aspx>**

Staff List and Organisational Structure

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/the-executive/>**

Management Statement and Financial Memorandum

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/msfm.pdf>**

Anti-fraud and Bribery Policy

**[http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/finance/ACNI\\_anti\\_fraud\\_policy.pdf](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/finance/ACNI_anti_fraud_policy.pdf)**

Fraud Response Plan

**[http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/finance/ACNI\\_fraud\\_response\\_plan.pdf](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/finance/ACNI_fraud_response_plan.pdf)**

NICS Central Procurement Directorate Financial Guidelines

**<http://www.cpdni.gov.uk/>**

NICS Finance Guidelines

**<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/>**



## What our priorities are and how we are doing.

### **Strategic Plan and Annual Business Plan**

In developing its current strategy, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland commissioned an independent review of its previous five year plan: 'The Arts - Inspiring the Imagination, Building the Future'. The overall purpose of the review was to assess the impact and achievements of the Arts Council's policies, plans and programmes over this period. A series of public meetings were held across Northern Ireland and interested parties invited to contribute towards the development of the new strategy. The review document and responses are available on the Arts Council website.

The executive of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland supported the Council and its committees in developing the current strategy. This strategy ("Creative Connections – a five year plan for developing the arts 2007-2012") was launched in January 2007.

The strategy informs the annual business plan, which is also available on the Arts Council website.

### **Annual Reports**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland Annual Report is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under Article 8 (2) (c) and Article 9 of the Arts Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.

The accounts of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland are prepared in a form directed by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure with the consent of the Department of Finance and Personnel in accordance with Article 8 of the Arts Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The financial statements are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in accordance with the Arts Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. He is Head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and he and his staff are wholly independent of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. He reports his findings to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

In relation to National Lottery funding, The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is required to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year in accordance with sections 35(2) and 35(3) of the National Lottery etc. Act 1993

and accounts direction given by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, with the approval of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

Both sets of Annual Reports and Accounts are available on the Arts Council website.

### **Performance Reviews, Reports to Parliament, Inspection Reports**

The Arts Council undertakes an annual performance review. This is a review of how the Council is performing measured against the business plan and strategy.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland undertakes independent reviews of its processes to ensure that it is developing its people, structure and processes in line with its business plan and strategy. These reviews have led to accreditation by "Investors in People" and "Steps to Excellence"

The executive summary of the Steps to Excellence report is available on the Arts Council website.

### **Service Standards and Public Service Agreements**

The Arts Council strategy "Creative Connections – a five year plan for developing the arts 2007-2012") emphasises the standards of service that the Council will deliver to its clients:

"[The Council] recognise that relationships with our clients should be clearly structured and easily understood. To help this process we have drawn up a 'Service Charter' which sets out what our clients can expect from us, and what we expect from them. We will regularly consult with the arts sector to make sure that our programmes and processes are effective, and also to gauge their feelings on more general issues."

The Council's business plan reflects the Public Service Agreements in DCAL's Corporate Strategy.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland Service Charter is available on the Arts Council website.

## Statistics and Research

The Council's decision-making process with regards to strategies and activities is fed by the research programme which is designed and implemented by the Strategic Development Department. The research programme covers an array of projects, from large scale public consultations on the future development of the arts sector to original research into the impact of the arts. The Strategic Development Department works with other departments of the Council: gathering information; identifying trends; evaluating programmes and generating evidence to help inform future policy and to support the Council's advocacy of the arts.

A range of publications from this research is published on the Arts Council website.

## Publications

5 Year Arts Plan (2007-2012)

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/strategy>

Annual Reports and Accounts

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/news/publications-archive/g/annual-reports>

Service Charter

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/customer-service>

Research Reports

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/research-and-development/research-publications>

## How we make decisions.

### **Major Policy Proposals and Decisions and Background Information**

The executive of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland supports the Council and its committees in major policy proposals and decisions. This support is recorded in the minutes of the meetings of the Arts Council. These minutes are available on the Arts Council website.

### **Public Consultations**

The Arts Council undertakes regular consultations with its clients, as committed to in the current strategy:

“We will regularly consult with the arts sector to make sure that our programmes and processes are effective, and also to gauge their feelings on more general issues.”

These consultations occur through regular meetings between Arts Council Officers and individual artists and administrators, sectoral meetings and through public consultation processes. The Arts Council has also made use of a client focus group (drawn from those organisations supported through the Annual Support for Organisations Programme) to review the administrative systems and procedures relating to the programme. A regular customer satisfaction survey is also undertaken to ensure the Council is meeting the expectations of its stakeholders.

Consultations being undertaken by the Arts Council, and reports relating to their outcome, are available on the Arts Council website.

### **Minutes of Senior Level Meetings**

The minutes of all Arts Council board meetings are available on the Arts Council website, alongside the agendas for future meetings.

## Artform Policies

The key aspect of the Arts Council's business is supporting the arts. To this end, the Council has developed policies for each of the major artforms:

- Acquisitions
- Arts & Disability
- Arts & Health
- Architecture
- Carnival Arts
- Circus Arts
- Commissioning
- Community Arts
- Crafts & Applied Arts
- Dance
- Drama
- International
- Language Arts
- Literature
- Music & Opera
- Public Art
- Traditional Arts
- Visual Arts
- Voluntary Arts
- Youth Arts

These contain information about the artform in question and details of the current funding objectives relating to the artform.

## Guidance and Criteria used for Decision Making

The guidance and criteria used for funding decisions are available as part of the applicant information for each funding stream.

The Arts Council provides applicants with information relating to deadlines, timescale of assessment and the decision making process, criteria for assessment, standard terms and conditions for funded projects, information on how projects are monitored and the level of funding available.

The Arts Council informs applicants:

- In writing or by email, that we have received their application, within 20 working days of the closing deadline.
- They can expect a decision by the published date and normally within 90 days of the closing deadline. If the Arts Council finds that it will take longer to make a decision, the applicant will be informed.

If the application is successful, grantees will be informed:

- How much grant has been awarded.
- How long the grant is available for and how it will be paid.
- The name of the arts officers assigned to the grant.
- What the grant can and cannot be used for.
- Conditions the grantee must meet and any further information or documents needed before funds can be released.
- Details of monitoring and evaluation arrangements, including the records the grantee must keep.
- Guidance for acknowledging Arts Council support and for promoting the project.

If the application is unsuccessful, applicants will be informed:

- Why the application was unsuccessful, in writing.
- They have the opportunity to discuss the matter with staff of the Arts Council.

Applicants may request a formal review of the decision.

## **Publications**

Council Agenda and Minutes

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/board-meetings>**

Funding Programmes and Guidelines

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/funding>**

Artform Policy Documents

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/the-arts/>**

## Our Policies and Procedures

### **Policies and Procedures for the Conduct of Departmental Business**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is a statutory body and is governed by a Council of up to fifteen members. The Council is advised by various panels and committees which it appoints. Its policies and programmes are implemented by an executive staff headed by the Chief Executive.

The executive of the Council maintains a Staff Handbook which provides staff with information about the Council, conditions of employment, codes of practice, and key internal policies and procedures. The policies and procedures in the Staff Handbook generally follow Northern Ireland Civil Service guidelines.

The Council aims to provide and promote a safe and harmonious working environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect based on the fundamental principles of fairness and equality for all.

In serving its clients and the public, the Council is also committed to the public service values of: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty and leadership.

It is the responsibility of everyone to ensure these principles are upheld in all dealings with staff, clients and the public.

In all situations, the Council will act in accordance with current legislation and regulations on employment, equality, health and safety, information processing and data protection as they apply to Northern Ireland.

The handbook does not give full details in every area and reference is made to policy documents and other sources where more detailed information may be obtained. Where these are Arts Council publications, hyperlinks are inserted in the handbook. Where it has no policies or procedures of its own or where policies require periodic updating, the Council normally follows those contained in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Staff Handbook, which is available on the Northern Ireland Civil Service website.

Each member of staff is issued with a copy of the Arts Council's Staff Handbook on joining the Council. The key areas covered in the handbook are:

- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Joint Declaration of Protection
- Employment Procedures
- Overtime Entitlement
- Policy on Employer's Discretions
- Performance Management System
- Staff Development and Training
- Sabbatical Leave, Career Breaks etc
- Flexible Working Hours
- Annual Leave Arrangements
- Management of Sickness Policy
- NICS Maternity, Paternity and Adoptive Leave Arrangements
- Working Time Regulations
- Health & Safety at Work Policy
- Fire & Emergency Evacuations Procedures
- Lone Workers Policy
- Harassment in the Workplace
- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Redundancy Agreement
- Internet and Email Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) sets out the broad framework within which the Council operates in terms of its relationship with DCAL.

To complement the MSFM the Council has in place a set of Standing orders. These documents are available on the Arts Council website.

### **Policies and Procedures for the Provision of Services**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Service Charter sets out the standards of service that the Council will deliver to its clients. The guidance and criteria used for grant applications are available as part of the information for each funding stream.

The Service Charter and Guidelines for Applicants are available on the Council's website.

### **Policies and Procedures for the Recruitment and Employment of Staff**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland adopts best practice standards as set out by the Equality Commission NI regarding the Recruitment and Employment of Staff.

The details of the relevant Council policies are in the Arts Council Staff Handbook (the details of which are outlined above).

### **Customer Service**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Service Charter sets out the standards of service that the Council will deliver to its clients.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland Service Charter is available on the Arts Council website.

The Council has a Service Complaints Procedure and a Funding Review Procedure both of which are available on the website.

### **Records Management and Personal Data Policies**

The Arts Council reviewed its record management policy and developed a new file plan during 2008. This resulted in the development of a new Arts Council Disposal Schedule.

Disposal schedules are a legal requirement under the *Public Records Act (NI), 1923*. They encourage control over the records created by a public authority; they enable Information/Records Managers to dispose of records promptly when they cease to be of any continuing administrative/legal value; and they identify records that should be transferred to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland because of their long-term historical/research value.

This disposal schedule is available on the Arts Council website.

The Arts Council Information Security policy sets out how information is stored and processed by staff within the Arts Council. An executive summary of this document is available on the Arts Council website.

## **Charging Regimes and Policies**

Fees charged for Freedom of Information requests are dependent on a number of factors including the volume of material requested. Responses to enquiries that cost the Arts Council of Northern Ireland less than £450 to process will be normally be provided free of charge. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has the right to refuse to respond to a request that is estimated to cost more than £450 to process. If the cost is greater than £450 and you agree to pay these costs the Arts Council of Northern Ireland will normally provide you with the information once the fee has been paid.

## **Publications**

Northern Ireland Civil Service Staff Handbook

**<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/working-in-the-nics.htm>**

Service Charter

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/customer-service>**

Management Statement

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/the-board>**

Staff List and Organisational Structure

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/the-executive/>**

NICS Central Procurement Directorate Financial Guidelines

**<http://www.cpdni.gov.uk/>**

NICS Finance Guidelines

**<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/>**

## Lists and Registers

### **Public Registers and Registers held as Public Records**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland does not hold or maintain a public register as part of its statutory duties.

### **Asset Registers and Information Asset Register**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland maintains a list of its assets, for audit and insurance reasons, which is updated on a continual basis as new items are purchased or disposed of.

The key assets purchased in the public interest are the artworks purchased for the Arts Council of Northern Ireland Collection. The collection comprises over twelve hundred works of art including paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs, crafts and mixed media works. Details of new works purchased by the Arts Council are available on the Arts Council website

### **Disclosure logs**

The Arts Council maintains a summary log of Freedom of Information requests. This summary is available on the Arts Council website.

### **Register of Gifts and Hospitality Provided to Board Members and Senior Personnel**

The Arts Council maintains a list of all gifts and hospitality received by all staff and board members.

### **Any Register of Interests Kept in the Department**

The Arts Council maintains a list of register of interests for all staff and board members.

The register of interests is available on the Arts Council website

## **Other Lists Required by Law**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland does not hold or maintain other lists required by law.

## **Publications**

Register of Interests (Board)

**[http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/board\\_doi.pdf](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/board_doi.pdf)**

Register of Interests (Staff)

**[http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/staff\\_doi.pdf](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/staff_doi.pdf)**

Hospitality (Board and Staff)

**[http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/gifts\\_hosp.pdf](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/gifts_hosp.pdf)**

Freedom of Information Request Log

**[http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/FOI/foi\\_requests.pdf](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/FOI/foi_requests.pdf)**

## The Services we Offer

### **Regulatory responsibilities**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the lead development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland. The Council is the main support for artists and arts organisations, offering a broad range of funding opportunities through its Exchequer and National Lottery funds. The Arts Council aims and objectives are outlined in the Council's five year strategy document. The Council reports on its activities through the publication of its Exchequer and National Lottery Annual Reports and Accounts. These documents are available on the Arts Council website

### **Services for Public Authorities**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has a long established relationship with Northern Ireland's local authorities and recognises the importance of sharing resources and building a common vision at the local level.

As part of its statutory obligations the Council advise the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and other government departments, district councils and other bodies on matters relating to the arts and such other functions as are conferred on the Council by any other statutory provision.

Details of projects being undertaken by the Council are available on the Arts Council website, along with details of the Council's statutory obligations.

### **Services for Industry and Other Organisations**

The Arts Council provides support to the Creative Industries. This includes support to individual artists and arts based organisations through various funding schemes. The Council also provides advice to artists and arts based organisations and acts as an advocate for the sector as a whole.

Details of funding schemes operated by the Council and press releases highlighting arts activities, advocacy and news are available on the Arts Council website.

## **Services for Members of the Public**

Public benefit is one of the core criteria used for all funding decisions made by the Council. Through the funding of venues, projects and events the public in Northern Ireland benefit. These benefits include improvements in lifestyle and environment, as well as economic benefits through an enhanced creative industries sector.

Details of projects and artists funded by the Arts Council are available on the Arts Council website.

## **Fees**

Fees charged for Freedom of Information requests are dependent on a number of factors including the volume of material requested. Responses to enquiries that cost the Arts Council of Northern Ireland less than £450 to process will normally be provided free of charge. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has the right to refuse to respond to a request that is estimated to cost more than £450 to process. If the cost is greater than £450 and you agree to pay these costs the Arts Council of Northern Ireland will normally provide you with the information once the fee has been paid.

The Arts Council also charges for occasional events which it organises such as the Arts Council Annual Conference.

## **Leaflets, Booklets and Newsletters**

The Arts Council publishes a range of leaflets and booklets. These are grouped into the following topics:

- Annual Reports and Accounts
- Corporate, Informational and Promotional Material
- Consultation
- Strategy
- About the Arts
- Funding
- Research

Arts Council publications are made available on the Arts Council website as they are available. New publications, and news stories, are highlighted on the home page, news page and through the free Arts Council email newsletter.

## **Advice and Guidance**

As part of its statutory obligations, the Arts Council provides advice and guidance to a range of stakeholders.

The Arts Council became a statutory body on 1st September 1995. Its functions are set out in Article 4 (1) of the Arts Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1995:

- to develop and improve the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts;
- to increase public access to, and participation in, the arts;
- to encourage and assist:
  1. the provision of arts facilities and events; &
  2. co-ordination and efficient use of resources for the arts;
- to assist the provision of administrative services and training for or by any body providing facilities for, or in connection with, the arts;
- to advise the Department and other government departments, district councils and other bodies on matters relating to the arts and such other functions as are conferred on the Council by any other statutory provision.
- to allocate funds made available by central government and the National Lottery for the arts;
- to advocate the causes of the arts to central and local government and the public generally;
- to advise the public and private sectors on artistic matters;
- to assist artists and arts-activists.

Details of the Arts Council activities in this area, along with publications giving advice to artists and arts organisations regarding funding are provided on the Arts Council website

## **Media Releases**

The Arts Council maintains an archive of media releases from December 2000 to the present day on its website.

### **Other Information Provided by the Arts Council**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has supported a number of web based information projects, which make a range of information available to the public. These include a database of Northern Irish composers, international arts information, and an archive of the way artists reacted to the troubles.

## **Publications**

Annual Reports and Accounts

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/news/publications-archive/g/annual-reports>**

Funding Programmes and Guidelines

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/funding>**

Artform Policy Documents

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/the-arts/>**

Arts Council News and Press Releases

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/news>**

Consultation Reports

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/departs/all/report/consultation.htm>**

Strategy

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/strategy>**

About the Arts

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/the-arts/>**

Research

**<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/research-and-development>**

## OBTAINING INFORMATION

The information listed in the publication scheme is available on the Arts Council website ([www.artscouncil-ni.org](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org)) or through the direct links to individual sections listed at the end of each section.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with the scheme.

### **Charges which may be made for Information published under the scheme**

The purpose of the scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the Arts Council for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under the scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

### **Written Requests**

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.



**Alternative formats of this publication may be available on request.**

**For further information please contact:**

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